

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03004 01 OF 02 130931Z
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 3004

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (WOLFF, LESTER)
SUBJ: CODEL WOLFF VISIT TO KOREA

SUMMARY: CODEL WOLFF'S VISIT TOKOREA APRIL 10-12 WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS, AND DEFENSE MINISTER, AS WELL AS WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS. CODEL OFFERED REASSURANCE RE U.S. SECURITY COMMITMENT OT KOREA WHILE CLEARLY SETTING FORTH CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. AFTER INITIAL NERVOUSNESS, KOREANS RECEIVED CODEL WARMLY. VISIT RECEIVED EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE AND REACTION, PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL, HAS BEEN FAVORABLE. END SUMMARY:

1. REPRESENTATIVE LESTER WOLFF, CHAIRMAN OF THE EAST ASIAN SUBCOMMITTEE, HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE, WITH REPRESENTATIVES MARIO BIAGGI, HELEN MEYNER AND BILLE LEE EVANS VISITED KOREA APRIL 10-12 1977 ACCOMPANIED BY MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES AND STAFF.THEY WERE JOINED ON APRIL 11 BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY REICHARD HOLBROOKE.

2. THE VISIT INCLUDED A ONE-HOUR AND 40 MINUTE MEETING
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03004 01 OF 02 130931Z

WITH PRESIDENT PAK (REPORTED SEPTEL) AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER AS WELL AS LUNCH WITH THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND A NUMBER OF ASSMEBLY MEMBERS. THEDELEGATION RECEIVED BRIEFINGS FROM THE COUNTRY TEAM, THE UN COMMAND, JSUMAG AND OTHER MILITARY HEADQUARTERS. MOST OF THE GROUP VISITED THE JOINT SECURITY AREA, PANMUNJOM. CONGRESSMAN EVANS, WITH MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE, VISITED THE SECOND DIVISION FOR A MEETING WITH MAJ. GEN. MORRIS BRADY. THE DELEGATION ATTENDED A RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE AMBASSADOR TO WHICH A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF KOREAN SOCIETY WAS INVITED. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION ALSO HELD A NUMBER OF PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH INDIVIDUAL KOREANS AND MAERICANS RESIDENT IN KOREA, INCLUDING ANUMBER OF LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURES. THE DELEGATION HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE AIRPORT IMMEDIATELY BEFORE ITS DEPARTURE ON THE MARONING OF APRIL 12. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE VISIT: CERTAIN KEY EVENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEPARATELY.

3. IN MOST OF HIS MEETINGS, AND IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE (SEPTEL) CHAIRMAN WOLFF, TOGETHER WITH OTHER OF THE DELEGATION, REAFFIRMED THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO KOREA AND CONCERN WITH KOREAN SECURITY, NOTING THAT FOLLOWING THE DELEGATION'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON, HIS COMMITTEE WOULD BE DEALING WITH THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. WOLFF STRESSED THAT THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW U.S. GROUND TROOPS HAS BEEN MADE ONLY IN PRINCIPLE WITHOUT AND DEFINITE SCHEDULE, AND NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SAID THE WITHDRAWAL WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WEAKEN THE MILITARY DEFENSES OF THE ROK. MR. WOLFF ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT NORTH KOREA NOT REPEAT ITS MISCALCULATION WHICH LED TO WAR IN 1950.

4. TO BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS CHAIRMAN WOLFF AND HIS COLLEAGUES UNDERScoreD PROBLEMS IN U.S.-KOREAN RELATIONS. WOLFF REFERRED TO THE PAK TONG-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 03004 01 OF 02 130931Z

SUN BRIBERY CHARGES AS PERHAPS REFLECTING EXCESSES BY BOTH SIDES WHICH SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE BASIC U.S.-ROK RELATIONSHIP. HE STRESSED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON HUMANRIGHTS, WHILE NOT DIRECTED ALONE AT KOREA, AND WHILE REFLECTIONG A PROPER AND CONTINUING CONCERN WITH ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES, NEVERTHELESS APPLY TO KOREA. HE URGED THAT KOREA ACCEPT AMERICAN OBSERVATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS NOT AS PRESSURE OR AS AN EFFORT TO IMPOSE THE U.S. WILL BUT AS AN EXPRESSION OF FRIENDLY CONCERN FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE MANY IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN COMMON.HE CONCLUDED THAT ONE CONCERN IN THIS REGARD WAS WITH THE DANGER OF DESTABLIZING COUNTER REACTION IF DOMESTIC CONTROLS ARE TOO TIGHTLY APPLIED.

5. PRIME MINISTER CHO'OE STRESSED THE HOSTILITY OF NORTH KOREA, IN FACE OF WHICH THE ROK PURSUES A 3-POINT PROGRAMOF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MILITARY STRENGTY AND "CONSOLIDATION OF THE NATIONAL CONSENSUS." CH'OE SAID THE CONTINUATION OF EM 9 WAS A FUNCTION OF THE NORTH KOREAN ATTITUDE, IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ROK CONSTITUTION, AND IS ACCELTEED

BY A LARGE MAJORITY. HE SAID IT INVOLVED NO VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. CH'OE NOTED THE ROK'S COMMITMENT OT PEACEFUL UNIFICATION, ADDING THAT HE ENVISAGED A PERIO D OF 10-15 YEARS OF CO-EXISTENCE AND INCREASING CONTACT, AIMED AT RESTORING CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF THE PENINSULA, BEFORE ANY REAL POLITICAL CHAGE. CH'OE SAID THE ROK DID NOT FAVOR U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL BUT WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO ACDEPT A U.S. DECISION AND HOPED THAT THE U.S. WOULD PROVIDE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO FULFILL THE ROK FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN; HE SAID THE ROKG IS READY TO CONSULT ON WITHDRAWAL WHEN THE U.S. HAS SPECIFICS TO DISCUSS.

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03004 02 OF 02 130946Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 3004

6. AT THE MINISTRYOF NATIONAL DEFENSE BRIEFING, PRESIDED OVER BY DEFENSE MINISTER SUH, THE ROK BRIEFER (MAJOR GENERAL SON CHANG-NEA) OUTLINED THE VULNERABILITY OF THE ROK, DUE TO INEQUALITIES IN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TO THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF KOREA IN GENERAL AND SEOUL IN PARTICULAR. REFERRIING TO THE FORMER MILITARY MODERNIZATION (MOD) PLAN, HE NOTED THAT ITS IMPLEMENTATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED OVER A LONGER PERIOD THAN PLANNED, AND HAD ENCOUNTERED APPROXIMATELY 100 PERCENT INFLATION IN PRICES DURING ITS EXISTENCE. HE DESCRIBED THE \$5.2 BILLION FORCE IMPORVEMENT PLAN AND EXPRESSED A HOPE FOR U.S. COOPERATION IN FULFILLING IT. HE ALSO URGED THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY AND EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION ON U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL PLANS, AND CONCLUDED WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT WHEN KOREANS THINK OF MORALITY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY THEY THINK OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO KOREAN SECURITY.

7. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF NOTED THAT AMERICANS SEEM TO HAVE MORE FAITH IN THE ROK'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF THAN THE KOREANS DO. MINISTER SUH SAID THAT HE FELT AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE WOULD BE POSSIBLE GIVEN ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT BUT THAT EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE, TO PREVENT WAR, WAS THE FIRST OBJECTIVE AND A LESS CERTAIN MATTER.
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03004 02 OF 02 130946Z

8. DURING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LUNCHEON CHAIRMAN CHONG NAE-HYOK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEFENSE COMMITTEE SAID HE FELT U.S. GROUND FORCES SHOULD REMAIN IN KOREA AS A CONTINUED DETERRENT, UNTIL THE "BASIC ENVIRONMENT" CHANGES. ASSEMBLYWOMAN SO YONG-HUI, EXPRESSED SOME IRRITATION OVER U.S. PRESS CRITICISMS OF THE ROK AND ITS LEADER, AND VOICED DISMAY THAT SPEAKER O'NEILL HAD RECENTLY REFUSED TO SEE NDP LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG. OPPOSITION ASSEMBLYMAN OM YONG-DAL SAID HE HAD SOUGHT A DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, HAD NOT BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE, BUT THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY WERE FREE TO DEBATE SUCH AN ISSUE EVEN THOUGH THE EMERGENCY MEASURE LIMITED DISCUSSION OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY.

9. MEMBERS OF THE CODEL MET WITH A VARIETY OF OPPOSITION FIGURES, INCLUDING MRS. KIM DAE-JUNG, FORMER PRESIDENT YUN PO-SON, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND MYONGDONG DEFENDENT CHONG IL-HYONG, AND HIS WIFE YI TAE-YONG, BOTH OF WHOM ATTENDED AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION, CARDINAL KIM AND U.S. MISSIONARY EDWARD POITRAS. WOLFF REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED CONCERN TO MRS. KIM DAE-JUNG OVER HER HUSBAND'S IMPRISONMENT AND SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO HELP. (AT THE CODEL'S WISH, EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE NOT PRESENT AT MOST OF THESE MEETINGS.)

10 COMMENT: THERE WAS SOME INITIAL NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART OF THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT FOR THE DELEGATION DUE LARGELY WE BELIEVE TO PAST SUNDAL CHARGES AND CODEL'S OWN EXPRESSED DESIRES FOR LOW KEY TREATMENT, AS WELL AS UNCERTAINTY RE CODEL'S INTENTIONS, AND IN FACT RECEPTION WAS NOTICEABLY LESS LAVISH THAN FORMERLY? SPEAKER'S LUNCHEON WAS ONLY OFFICIAL ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY ROKG AND THERE WAS NOTABLE ABSENCE OF FLOWERS, GIFTS AND OTHER ATTENTIONS DURING VISIT. THERE
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PAGE 03 SEOUL 03004 02 OF 02 130946Z

WAS NO LACK OF PERSONAL WARMTH IN ROK GREETING HOWEVER. TOP
LEVEL LEADERS SHOWED UP FOR AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION AND AS THE
ABOVE RECORD INDICATES, THERE WAS EXTENSIVE AND USEFUL SUBSTANT-
IVE EXCHANGE WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE ROKG. THE VISIT
RECEIVED EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE (SEPTTEL) AND INITIAL KOREAN
GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE REACTION DESPITE CONTINUING ANXIETY ON
SECURITY HAS BEEN HIGHLY FAVORABLE. THIS LARGELY DUE TO CODEL'S
REASSURANCE REGARDING SECURITY COMMITMENT AND EVIDENCE VISIT
PROVIDED KOREANS THAT THEY ARE NOT BEING FORGOTTEN OR IGNORED.
WE BELIEVE DISCUSSIONS ACHIEVED GREATER UNDERSTANDING ON BOTH
SIDES OF THE COMPLEX ISSUES EACH GOVERNMENT FACES IN THE
RELATIONSHIP.
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